

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Thomas a Becket Church of England Aided Primary School

Address High Street, Tilshead, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP3 4RZ.

School vision

You only have one life, one childhood, one opportunity. School is one of the most important experiences you will ever have. At St Thomas a Becket we will stop at nothing to ensure that you are given every chance to succeed through your entire time with us. Through our faith and wisdom, we will give you strong roots to grow into resilient, respectful, and ambitious citizens. We will open doors so that you can imagine endless possibilities and a life without limits. We will give you wings to fly.

‘Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.’ *Mark 4:31-32 and Matthew 17:20* ‘With faith as small as a mustard seed nothing is impossible.’

School strengths

- The deeply thought through Christian vision, underpinned by biblical thinking, exerts a very positive influence upon the school. The phrase ‘roots to grow and wings to fly’ is meaningful to all.
- Collective worship is a strength and enables pupils to flourish spiritually. Pupils are highly engaged in the prayerful atmosphere that is created. Collective worship is carefully planned by school leaders. The worship council is active, and leaders act upon council suggestions for improvement.
- Leaders understand the needs of the community and the curriculum offer is wholeheartedly driven by the vision of the school. It is well planned.
- Exceptional support is provided for those pupils who are vulnerable or have additional learning needs, in line with the school’s vision.
- Teaching and learning opportunities in religious education (RE) are well planned and respond to pupils’ need. Pupils are well supported to develop their own ideas and opinions. There is a strong focus on ensuring pupils understand the language associated with the faith they are studying.

Areas for development

- Identify and plan for opportunities to promote the development of spirituality throughout the curriculum. This will enable pupils to flourish in their spirituality.
- Encourage pupils to be proactive leaders of change, based on their own interests. This will enable them to express their own voice and become more effective agents of change.

Inspection findings

The passion of staff, governors, and trustees for every pupil to succeed ensures that the vision drives their work. It is completely appropriate to the context of the school. Pupils and staff are given every opportunity to flourish. Christian values, which are well known, help pupils to live out the vision. The trust vision of ‘every child, every chance’ aligns well with that of the school. This synergy was one of the key reasons for the school deciding to join

The Equa Mead Learning Trust. Members of the trust board and governors know the school well. They provide support and challenge in equal measure. The Church school flourishing committee's close and systematic evaluation of the school against the vision is effective.

The revision of the curriculum has been strongly influenced by the vision of the school. It is now deeper and allows pupils to flourish just like the mustard seed that grows into a great tree. This has been transformational in developing pupils' knowledge. Extra-curricular activities such as VE day celebrations and pond restoration, ensure pupils are given experiences that widen horizons. The pupils talk of their learning opportunities with enthusiasm. Staff clearly recognise, value, and encourage the uniqueness of each pupil. Those pupils who are vulnerable or have additional needs are supported extremely well. Staff adapt learning for them so that they can fully engage in lessons. However, the curriculum does not provide planned opportunities for the development of individual spirituality.

Pupils and staff see collective worship as a time of togetherness when the school meets to worship, reflect and sing. Collective worship plays an important part in developing pupils' spirituality. To support this, symbols of reflection are used to which staff and pupils contribute. The current symbol is an umbrella, with raindrops drawn on to illustrate the protection that God's love gives. Pupils write prayers and leave them beneath the umbrella. Older pupils talk confidently of the ways they connect with God, particularly through prayerful singing. Staff feel affirmed by collective worship and look forward to this time together. Worship is carefully planned by leaders and the vicar together. Pupils gain spiritually from the use of Anglican liturgy, and worship aligned with the Church's calendar year. Pupils participate through spontaneous prayer, answering 'big questions' designed to make them think about the meaning of weekly Bible stories. Class worship links into discussion of issues raised during whole school worship. Worship, which takes place weekly in the church, is invitational and inclusive.

Relationships within this small school are exceptionally strong. The Christian vision is very evident at breaktimes with pupils of all ages playing well together. There is an overwhelming sense of care, driven by the school vision. Attendance is high. Children who have joined mid-year with poor attendance now have full attendance. This is due to the focus on inclusivity. Parents regard highly the care the school provides for their children. This is well beyond what would be expected. Staff wellbeing is a high priority. Staff are supported with personalised training. Support in the teaching of RE comes from within the school, the diocese, and the wider trust. Many staff consider the school to be 'a special place.' Personal support from leaders is valued during times of challenge and difficulty. Leaders model how to serve others well and seek to live as Jesus teaches. The vicar, driven by the vision of the school, is clear that the wellbeing of all is her priority. This level of support is above what might be expected. Parents value the high levels of respect that staff model and pupils demonstrate this respect at home. Pupils are tolerant of one another and consequently respect other's views.

Partnerships are important to the school. It has developed strong links with the church and local community. As a result, the school and church flourish together as a united community. Together they create events, building community links and helping the school to live out its Christian vision. This can be evidenced by the community café, where the focus is on further developing positive relationships. The school in line with its vision to help pupils to develop 'roots to grow and wings to fly,' provide conversation starters to help with this. Pupils provide tea, cake, singing and companionship. The school works with the community on 'make a difference day'. Together they improve the environment and care for God's world. Pupils have created a community library resource for all to access so that reading material is shared and discussed. During the Moroccan earthquake appeal, pupils came together to raise money. This was for the families who had a connection with the school and were affected by the earthquake. The school takes part in the trust pupil parliament, which acts against injustice. Pupils take

responsibility and participate in elections for the school council, to emphasise the importance of service to others. However, pupils are not aware of how they can act independently as agents of change.

RE is seen as an important core subject by the school, governors, and the trust. RE teaching has been recently reviewed. Quality training for staff in teaching religious education (RE) has been provided by leaders. The subject is delivered weekly and is well-sequenced. As a result, pupil knowledge is retained through revisiting concepts rooted in every lesson. The school uses a carefully selected variety of well-structured resources, adapted by teachers to meet need and deepen knowledge. Pupils contribute with enthusiasm to discussions in RE. The school studies a variety of faiths and worldviews as well as Christianity. Therefore, pupils make links between and across religions. RE is closely monitored by leaders, governors and the trust. They quickly identify inconsistency in teaching and ensure misconceptions are addressed.

Teaching and learning in RE is engaging. There is a whole school approach to using pictures to illustrate specific RE vocabulary. This deepens learning. There is clear progression in planning that ensures pupils make good progress. Pupils show good biblical knowledge and enjoy discussing the 'big questions' of RE. As children progress through the school, they widen their understanding and questioning becomes deeper. Staff ensure pupils realise the importance of thinking beyond one's own needs and beliefs to understand that of others. Learning in RE is progressive over time, due to skilful planning from staff. Assessment is thorough and informs the next phase of teaching. It ensures that pupils understand what has been taught and can remember at a later stage. Staff focus on addressing any gaps in knowledge. This ensures that learning is accurate and is retained.

The inspection findings indicate that Saint Thomas a Becket School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	04 July 2024	URN	149557
VA/VC/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	43
Diocese	Salisbury		
MAT/Federation	Equa Mead Learning Trust		
Headteacher	Nicki Boast		
Chair	Keith Ratcliffe		
Inspector	Clare Murray	No.	C23/24